

Testimony submitted to the Data Security and Privacy Committee of the ILHIE Authority Board from Robyn Luke, Administrator, Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois, March 29, 2012. On behalf of Ben Yamnitz, MSW, Transition Engagement Specialist, Money Follows the Person Program, Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois

To Whom It May Concern:

First, I would like to thank you for consideration of this testimony. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Ben Yamnitz, a case manager at Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois and a consumer, who could not be present today.

My name is Ben Yamnitz and I have worked with individuals with mental health issues for over nine years. I was also treated for depression as a teen. The question today appears to be the benefits and concerns about sharing mental health information in an electronic form across multiple providers. My opinion is based not only on my experience as a consumer but also as a provider of mental health services. I believe that there are multiple benefits and multiple concerns. I will first address the benefits.

There are multiple benefits that I see to electronic access across multiple providers but one benefit stands out above all others. It will allow providers better access to necessary information in a timely manner to coordinate care. I personally witnessed a client of mine have her psychiatric medications completely changed when admitted to a local hospital for physical health reasons. The hospital did not have ready access to her psychiatric treatment records and due to her unresponsive state, was not able to gain consent. They were therefore using outdated medication information from a previous admission and as a result was giving inappropriate psychiatric medications. Had a shared electronic health record been available, and had the client previously given consent, her psychiatric care would not have been altered and her health outcome would have improved.

There are multiple benefits to electronic sharing of mental health records among multiple providers, but there are also multiple concerns, or issues that should be considered before proceeding. First, the issue of consent. I believe that it is imperative for the consumer to have the right to choose who will have access to their record. The consumer may feel that it is important for their primary care physician and local hospitals to have access mental health information but may not see it as necessary for their podiatrist to have the same access. Second, the consumer should be able to choose which parts of their mental health record that they want to share. It may be necessary to share information about medication and recent psychiatric appointments but the social history may not be necessary. Does a primary care physician need to know that a 50 year old consumer was physically abused as a child? Finally, I believe that the consumer must also be able identify the period of time

in one's life and relative information in the health record that is allowed to be shared. For example, the consumer could choose to share all information but they may opt to only share information from a more recent time period of treatment if that is all that is relevant for the treatment in question. .

Again, thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I hope that this and the testimony from others will help you make an informed decision with the consumer's best interest in mind.

Sincerely,

Robyn Luke, Administrator
Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois